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Pro Democrația

# 2012 electoral models

## II. Actors of the electoral competition

Those who vote and those who get voted

# 2012

## modele electorale

### **II. Actors of the electoral competition**

Those who vote and those who get voted

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# Who has the right to vote

From the point of view of the manner in which vote is cast, the criteria unanimously accepted nowadays, which define the democratic elections are those which belong to the universal, equal, secret and freely expressed character of the vote. This paper will, first of all, discuss the universal character of the vote.

Although universal vote is considered to be the main criterion for the elections to be regarded as democratic, Katz, for instance, observes that *"no country allows all adults to vote... Even though there has been a tendency in the last 200 years to remove one barrier after another, there are still many restrictions"*.

Throughout the XIX century and in the first part of the XX century, the right to vote for women and for the citizens deprived of financial means was not only the object of intense debate, but also of some huge campaigns claiming for this right. Unlike the way things were back then, actual restrictions affect smaller groups of people. These are usually felons, inhabitants of a country who are not citizens of that particular country, the mentally handicapped. The issue of who should or who should not be allowed to vote is still without a satisfactory answer.

This chapter reviews the manner in which democratic countries limit the right to vote. The provisions of the laws in force and of the debate over who should or should not be allowed to vote are also mentioned. It also discusses the frequency and the 'weight' of certain restrictions and analyzes whether there is a consensus between the democratic countries related to legitimate restrictions, noting legislative peculiarities.

We will as well observe how existing democracies perceive vote to be - as a right or as a responsibility; we will particularly analyze the countries where the vote is compulsory and what sanctions are applied if these duties are not followed.

## 1. The minimum vote age

The most common restriction referring to competence is the one related to the age at which the individual is

considered capable to express a vote in a reasonable manner. The exclusion of non-adults from this action is usually justified by the fact that only mature people can make sensible decisions and, that taking into consideration the difficulty of measuring a person's maturity, a decision taken based on age is justifiable. Children and teenagers may lack both the knowledge and the proper understanding and can also be influenced by their parents. Those who support an elder age, at which the individual can be granted the right to vote, consider that the maturity degree increases with age, therefore the older, the better. Those who sustain a younger age for voting argue that teenagers are better informed and more independent in their judgment than they used to be. Moreover, they emphasize the fact that, in certain fields, adolescents are treated as adults; they can have a job, they pay taxes, and, under certain circumstances, they can even be sentenced by a court.

Except a few cases, in most countries, the minimum age at which citizens may vote is 18 years old. It is the case of member countries of the European Union, as well as Bulgaria and Romania.

## 2. Mental Sanity

Since a person cannot make a sensible decision as long as his/her sanity is questioned, depriving the mentally disabled person of his/her right to vote may, apparently, seem totally justifiable. Yet, the criteria according to which mental diseases are ranked have evolved so much lately that, in several political analysts' opinion, whereas it is natural for severe diseases to determine the suspension of the right to vote, easier and temporary problems should not lead to it. However, on the other hand, it is almost impossible to draw a line that it is not subjective, between the severe disabilities and the less severe ones, so that in most member countries of the European Union, mentally disabled people are forbidden to vote. The exceptions from this rule are **Finland**, **Ireland** and **Italy**, where the law does not stipulate such restrictions.

### 3. Requirements related to citizenship

Until a few decades ago, being the citizen of a country represented an unchallenged requirement for granting the right to vote in any country. Yet nowadays, this requirement has been under debate for a long time.

Naturally, the compulsory requirement to have citizenship in order to obtain the right to vote is meant to preserve the cohesion within the national community. In order to vote, an individual should be completely integrated in the society he is part of. Thus, immigrants recently settled in a certain country are less familiar with the matters of that particular country and with the characteristics of the communities where they settle, being, under certain circumstances, easier to be manipulated. Some analysts believe that, due to the lack of this requirement, it is unacceptable for new immigrants to be able to hinder most 'older' member of the community, who are also citizens of the country, to obtain what they want by vote, especially within a close electoral competition.

On the other hand, those who support the 'loosening' of the requirement of being the citizen of a country in order to be able to vote, consider that this limitation represents nothing but a political discrimination since those who are citizens are only treated as 'subjects' of the state. After all, immigrants also pay taxes and income taxes to the state and follow the laws, and from this point of view, they should also be able to express their opinion on those particular taxes and income taxes, as well as on the laws they must abide by.

In the European Union, there are different rules regarding the granting of the right to vote by a state, to the citizens of other states, according to the type of elections.

As far as the local elections are concerned, any person who has his/her residence on the territory of a country without being the citizen of that country is entitled (alongside the citizens of that country) to vote (and candidate) when the local public authorities of that country are being elected. This right is regulated by the 94/80/EC Directive of the European Council and it is originated in the idea that a person who lives in a town in a country different than the one whose citizen he/she is, is as much interested in the decisions taken at the level of the local public administration as any citizen of that particular town. The decisions may refer, for instance, to the building of a road near his/her house or of a school nearby where his/her children may study and it is only natural for that resident to have a word when it comes to such decisions. It is important to know that people, who choose to vote for the local elections in their country of residence without being the citizens of that country, do not lose their right to vote for the local elections organized in the country whose citizens they are.

As to the legislative elections, there are three countries where the right to vote is granted to the people who are not citizens of these countries but there too, this right is reserved only for certain categories of foreigners. Thus, **Great Britain**, grants the right to vote to the citizens of the Commonwealth and those of Ireland. **Ireland** grants the right to vote to British citizens, and **Portugal** to the citizens of the European Union with permanent residence in Portugal and to the Brazilian citizens who have special "*equal rights*".

At the elections for the European Parliament, any citizen of a member country of the European Union may vote by choosing a candidate or a list of candidates who enter a competition in his/her country of residence, even though this country is different than the one whose citizen he/she is. Unlike the local elections, if he/she chooses to exercise his right to vote like any other citizen of the country where he only lives (without being the citizen of that country), he loses the right to vote for the elections organized in his native country whose rightful citizen he is (a right he may exercise either by going to that country, if the vote takes place on a different day than the one when he votes in his country of residence, or, as it is the case of many countries, by mail). The reason is that no citizen of the member country of the European Union should be allowed to contribute, by his/her vote, to the election of more than one member of the European Parliament.

### 4. Requirements related to residence

#### Residence in the constituency

A voter's duty to have had residence in his/her constituency for a certain period of time prior to the elections is defended by those who sustain that the integration in a community is essential to help determine its future. The opponents of this idea believe that this measure may lead to the citizens' depriving of their right to vote if they move often and that, as for the legislative elections, the elections are a national matter and not a purely local one.

#### Permanent residence

Demanding the voters to have had residence in a particular country for a certain period of time before the elections is based on the idea that those who have recently come to that country are not informed enough to be able to vote reasonably. The opponents of this idea consider that there is no reason to hinder these electors to vote just because they did not live in that country until recently. These citizens have the same duties and should have the same rights.



### Citizens having residence abroad

Demanding the voters to have residence in their native country at the moment of the elections was, for a long time, a very firm and usual requirement of the electoral laws. In countries with a high rate of immigration, keeping the right to vote for expatriates can have the role of sending them the message that they are still members of the national community and they are always welcomed if they wish to return. Some analysts insist that the expatriates are less interested in the manner in which their native country is run, especially if they do not pay taxes there; the analysts also draw the attention upon the costs of this vote and the danger of fraud. Many consider that the expatriates' right to vote in two different countries creates an unacceptable privilege.

In most countries, the citizens of the European Union who live abroad keep their right to vote. However, in some cases, the right to vote is more symbolic than real. Thus, in certain countries, the citizens who live abroad must return to their country on the Election Day to be able to vote. This disposition is to be found in the **Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Slovakia**. On the other hand **Italy** is trying to ease the electors' return home: those who work abroad, but within the Italian State's service has up to three days to vote and benefit from the fact that their travel expenses are defrayed by the state; the other citizens who are abroad are granted, also by the state, for their train transportation.

### Detainees

The detainees' suspension of their right to vote relies on the belief that society is based on an implicit contract that compels everybody to abide by the law. Therefore, those who break the law fail to meet their commitment and are not worthy of participating in the democratic process: *"only citizens have the right to vote and it would be unfair to consider criminals to be citizens"* (Planinc). The remote possibility that in a close electoral competition the vote of detained persons brings benefits to one or the other competitor is totally unacceptable to some people. Allowing detainees to vote also raises some practical problems such as the place where these people should vote.

The subject of the detainees' suspension of the right to vote is under scrutiny from several points of view. Some people consider that the current penal system has as purpose rehabilitation rather than penalty and that the setting of no limits upon the detainees' right to vote facilitates their reintegration into society. Others propose a differentiation between the detainees sentenced for short time penalties and those for severe crimes, so that the latter may lose their right to vote.

The table below presents a centralized situation regarding the suspension of the right to vote for mentally handicapped people, for the citizens living abroad (having the citizenship of their native country) and for the detainees, in the member countries of the European Union as well as in Bulgaria and Romania.

Country	Suspension of the right to vote for mentally disabled people	Suspension of the right to vote for citizens residing abroad	Suspension of the right to vote for detainees
Austria	Yes	No	Yes, for the sentences that exceed one year, the suspension is revoked six months after the end of the penalty.
Belgium	Yes	No	Yes, for detainees with sentences that exceed four months.
The Czech Republic	Yes	No	No
Cyprus	Yes	No	Yes, for any penalty.
Denmark	Yes	No (for 12 years)	No
Estonia	Yes	No	Yes, for any penalty.
Finland	No	No	No
France	Yes	No	Yes, for certain penalties.

**Table 1.** The right to vote for mentally disabled, detainees and nationals residing abroad

(continues)



Country	Suspension of the right to vote for mentally disabled people	Suspension of the right to vote for citizens residing abroad	Suspension of the right to vote for detainees
Germany	Yes	Yes, except for those who live in the member countries of the European Council and those who have lived in other countries for at least 10 years.	No
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	No	No	No
Italy	No	No	-
Latvia	Yes	No	Yes, for any penalty
Lithuania	Yes	No	No
Luxembourg	Yes	No	Yes, for any penalty
Malta	Yes	Yes, but only for those who had their residence abroad for more than 12 months, during the last 18 months.	Yes, penalties that exceed one year.
Netherlands	Yes	No, but only for those who live in Antilles or Aruba and who did not have their residence in Netherlands for at least 10 years.	Yes, penalties that exceed 1 year (for certain penalties).
Poland	Yes	No	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes, only for legislative elections	Yes, for any penalty.
United Kingdom	Yes	No, for 15 years.	Yes, for any penalty.
Slovakia	Yes	No	Yes
Slovenia	Yes	No	No
Spain	Yes	No	Yes, for certain penalties.
Sweden	Yes	No	No
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes, for any penalty.
Bulgaria	No	No	Yes
Romania	Yes	No	Yes

**Table 1.** *The right to vote for mentally disabled, detainees and nationals residing abroad*

(continued)

## 5. Compulsory vote

'The problem of the XX century', as a British analyst noticed, is 'to convince people to make use of their right to vote for which they fought: not to convince them to vote responsibly, but to convince them to go to vote' (Robson, 1923). This matter has become more and more delicate during the 1990s, when the vote participation rate lowered in all democracies.

The compulsory vote has the origin in Saint Gallen canton, in the **Switzerland** of 1835. **Belgium** adopted this rule in 1893 and nowadays, in the European Union, the vote is compulsory in other three states: **Cyprus**, **Greece** and **Luxemburg**.

The compulsory vote is the result of a vision on the act of voting as a civic responsibility that must be imposed by the state. Each member of the community must participate in the election process of the representatives in different forums. It is assumed that the low turnout affects the legitimacy of the elected officials, throwing a shadow of doubt on the results that would have been obtained if all the voters would have been present to the ballot. Some support that compulsory vote creates positive effects both on collective level and individual, as it allows the citizens to be "*real citizens*" in the sense of Green's idea (giving them the possibility to participate in the internal affairs) and at the same time the state becomes a 'real state' which acts in order to prevent exclusion.

The compulsory vote had a larger support before the Second World War than today. The situation from the between - wars period, when the Republic of Weimar, where the vote presence was high, became a totalitarian state, whereas the USA and the Great Britain, with a low presence at the ballot, were democratic regimes were preserved, determined many people to conclude that a high vote presence, although desirable in theory, is not a guarantee for the survival of democracy.

Those who are against the compulsory vote sustain that it is not a duty but a right and that the citizens must

have the freedom to exercise it or not. Some even go further and believe that compulsory vote is, theoretically, in contradiction with the free elections, as "*one of the democratic decisions is not to vote for any of the offered alternatives*" (Mackenzie 1958). Furthermore, in an age when politicians are not very much respected by voters, low participation to ballot may be considered a means of expressing deception or isolation from the politics of the parties - a panic signal to a political class which is disconnected from the social realities. Other analysts also emphasize the difficulty of enforcing such a rule on a mass of citizens who would not follow it and that the electors forced to come to ballot might invalid their vote or vote for the extremist and marginalized candidates. Finally, many support the idea that "*the opinions of the reckless or apathetic voters are not worthy to be taken into consideration*" (Hughes, 1966).

As far as the compulsory vote is concerned, the European Union countries are divided into three groups:

- a) those where the vote is compulsory and non-participation is sanctioned by law, such as Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg. In those countries, the sanction is a fine and, where Belgium is concerned, those who do not come repeatedly to the ballot may be omitted from the electoral lists, not being able to be nominated, promoted or distinguished from a public authority. On the other hand, electors who are on custody in Belgium, who are over 70 years old and live more than 50 km away from the polling station, as well as the voters who have a 'reasonable' justification not to come to the ballot (disease, a loss in the family etc), do not pay a fine;
- b) those where the legislation declares the vote as compulsory, without any sanction for the voters who do not come to the ballot, such as Italy and Portugal;
- c) the countries where the vote is not compulsory, but "*voluntary*".



# Who has the right to run for office

In the beginnings of the parliamentary system, almost all the states demanded those who wished to enter the Parliament, as well as those who supported them, to meet a series of requirements related to age, sex, estate, properties, education etc. Even though, in the last decades, these requirements have been removed, some of them are still to be found in the legislation of all the countries, while others, adapted to the new contexts and the existent standards, are nowadays being added both at European level, as well as worldwide. Thus, the electoral laws of most countries where democratic elections take place refer to ancient requirements similar to those related to age, citizenship, residence (within the country or within the territory of the constituency for which the candidate runs), but also to some new requirements like the duty of paying 'taxes' to participate in the elections or that of opening bank deposits at the state's disposal (as a security to prove a minimum of electoral support for the candidate or the party behind him/her).

Thus, to a certain extent, the actual eligibility limitations are universal although details may vary from one country to the other. They are, mainly, requirements related to age and citizenship. Others are more or less controversial, also including measures meant to limit the candidate 'inflation' such as the duty to open a bank deposit that the candidate or the party behind him/her may lose or not, according to the number of votes cast, or that of presenting, upon running for elections, a number of signatures from a certain number of supporters and the effects of this phenomenon such as the dilution of debate during electoral periods, the large, unjustified expenses from the public budget on the non-representative candidates, the electorate's confusion etc.

## 1. Age

Imposing, in all the countries where democratic elections are held, a minimum age limit, on the candidacies to different positions in the state, starting with those in local public administration and up to

presidency, reflects the existence of a unanimous opinion regarding the fact that a person aspiring to such a position should have a certain level of maturity, life experience and general knowledge that can be acquired only in time, at a certain age.

On the other hand, the minimum age limit differs from one position to the other, the highest for candidates running for the presidency of the country and the lowest for the positions in local public administration.

In the case of bicameral parliaments, there is another difference between the two Chambers of the Parliament, meaning that the minimum age imposed on candidates for the Upper Chamber is higher than for those who run for a seat in the Lower Chamber. Although in most countries with bicameral parliaments, the manner in which the attributions of the two Chambers are divided presently does not account for such difference regarding the minimum age of its members, it expresses the perpetuation of the idea that, in parliamentary life, the young's sometimes excessive enthusiasm must be tempered by the experience and the wisdom of the elders.

At European level, the minimum age average for parliamentary elections (or for the lower chamber where there are bicameral parliaments) is 21, although there is a small number of countries such as **Denmark, Germany, Malta, Holland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Hungary** where the age is 18, but also others where the age is 23 (**France, Romania**) or even higher (**Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania**).

As far as the presidential elections are concerned, the minimum age average imposed on the candidates is around 35. However, rather high differences can be encountered, from **Slovenia**, where the age limit is 18 years, or **France** where it is 23 years, to **Bulgaria and Lithuania** - countries where the President must be at least 40 years old (this matter concerns only those countries where the President is elected directly).

On the other hand, there is no superior age limit in any country<sup>1</sup>, at least for the positions for which direct elections are organized. Moreover, examples of great

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<sup>1</sup> In Canada, for instance, there is an age limit to retire from the political life, namely 75, but only for appointed senators.

men of state who marked not only their national history but also the European and the world history, confirm the fact that age is not generally an obstacle in the way of political excellence and when it is, the electorate must decide upon this. Among these examples, probably the best known are that of Konrad Adenauer who became chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany at the age of 73 and held this position until the age of 87 (when he had continued to be the President of the Christian Democratic Union for three more years), Charles de Gaulle who was elected as President of France at the age of 67 (holding this position for almost 12 years) or Ronald Reagan who was elected as President of the United States of America for the first mandate at the age of 69, then started the second mandate when he was 73 years old.

## 2. Citizenship

As shown above, citizenship is another criterion of eligibility unanimously accepted in all the countries where democratic elections are held, based on the idea that one must be a member of the community, alongside the citizens, in order to represent or rule over them. However, the fact that the number of countries where the dual citizenship of the candidates is accepted is growing, makes this criterion less 'rigid'.

As a rule, all the countries of the European Union ask the candidates running for presidency and those who run for Parliament to meet the citizenship requirement (obviously, those countries where elections are held for presidency). The 'age' of the citizenship or the length of time between the moment the citizenship was granted and that of forwarding the candidacy for a certain position.

## 3. Permanent residence

The candidate's duty to hold, for a long period of time, residence on the territory of the country in whose parliament he/she would be elected, is based on the idea that citizens of a certain country cannot be better represented in Parliament but by those who live and work on the territory of the country.

However, this restriction may raise some problems, such as those related to the rights of immigrants who acquire citizenship (but whose citizenship is not 'old' enough to allow them to candidate) or, in the case of the countries that went through periods of dictatorship, problems regarding the right to candidate and be elected of those who were recently forced to leave their native countries and who, afterwards, returned when the dictatorship was abolished. These aspects determined most countries of the European Union not to set restrictions for the parliamentary elections,

regarding the permanent residence, except for **Malta** and **Poland**, where only persons who have permanent residence for at least 6 months, or 5 years have the right to candidate. However, for the presidential elections, in those two countries and in **Lithuania**, the minimum permanent residence period for the candidates is three years. In **Bulgaria**, the candidates who run for presidency must have had permanent residence for at least five years.

## 4. Residence on the territory of the constituency

The requirement for residence in the constituency the candidate would represent has similar reasons as the one related to the permanent residence. The supporters of this requirement argue that the Member of Parliament is, at least partially, the delegate in Parliament of the inhabitants living in a certain area of the entire territory of the country, and those inhabitants can only be represented better by one among them.

The positive aspect of this view upon things resides in the fact that putting this vision into practice prevents the domination of the 'centre' politicians who, basically, live and function in the capital of the country.

The opposite of this theory is the doctrine that prevails among all the European constitutional law practitioners and which stipulates that once elected, the member of the parliament no longer represents the area where he was elected, but the entire nation and his activity transcends the interests of the 'parish' since the issues approached within the legislative activity are of national concern, except for a few minor ones. Furthermore, there are countries such as **Germany**, **Italy** and **Portugal**, if we were to refer to the European Union, or **Romania**, which have this principle stipulated in their constitutional texts. From this point of view, there should be no restriction regarding the candidate's residence since the voters should be the ones to decide whether they wish to be represented by someone who lives in their constituency or not.

Most democracies, including all countries member of the European Union, have rules that do not impose restrictions related to the candidates' residence. It might as well be known that, in some regions of the world, there are, still, countries such as Brazil, Chile, Philippines, Panama, Taiwan and Trinidad & Tabago where such restrictions function. In other three countries - Argentina, Ecuador and Papua New Guinea - a minimum period of residence in the constituency is demanded but only to the candidates who were not born in that particular constituency.



## 5. Opening a bank deposit at the disposal of the state institutions or paying a tax to register for the elections

The requirement to open a bank deposit at the state's disposal, either returnable or not, as well as a tax paid to register for the elections have the purpose to discourage those candidates who do not have an electoral support (or those who cannot afford losing their money). Since any candidate obliges the state to make further expenses during the electoral period, each candidate or political party must contribute to the expenses he or it is causing, especially if, after the elections, the party or the candidate proves to be representative only for a small number of citizens. As far as the paper ballots are concerned, in the countries that follow the French pattern, a paper ballot is printed for each candidate (regarding the single-winner voting system) or for each list of candidates (where the list system is used) and the voter who wishes to vote for a particular candidate or list must choose among the other ballot papers, introduce it into an envelope and then put the envelope into the ballot box. It is obvious that within the framework of such a pattern, important amounts of money are spent including on the printing of the ballot papers of those candidates who receive no vote. Although, to the same extent, it is a similar situation to that when all the candidates and all the lists of candidates in an electoral constituency are printed on the same ballot paper, allowing the voter to mark the name of the candidate or list of his/her choice. Each candidate or list makes the ballot paper larger and, consequently, the expenses higher. In many countries, the expenses associated to the time on TV or radio that the candidates receive freely to the public radio and television stations or those related to the efforts made by the members of the electoral bodies at different levels, at different moments in the electoral process, obviously related to the counting and founding the results can be added to the above-mentioned expenses.

The opponents of this principle argue that the duty to open a bank deposit at the disposal of the state institutions discriminates in favor of the wealthy candidates or those who have large amounts of money and that such a duty is nothing but a 'camouflaged property census' which, among other things, sets a barrier to the 'newcomers' in the political competition.

The principle of opening a bank deposit or of paying a tax to register the candidate divides the countries of the European Union into two relatively balanced sides. Whereas countries such as **Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden** do impose on their parties and candidates who participate in the elections neither to bring

evidence of their opening of bank deposits at the state's disposal, nor to pay a certain tax to register for the elections, such duties are in force in other countries: in **Austria**, any political party that wishes to participate in the elections must pay a non-returnable tax of 435 € representing their contribution to the costs of the printing of the ballot papers; in the **Czech Republic**, the deposit is established for each list of candidates and it is returned if the list obtains at least 5% of the valid cast votes for the political parties, 7% for the coalitions formed of two parties, 9% for the coalitions formed of three parties and 11% for the coalitions formed of four or more parties; in **Cyprus**, the deposit is established for each candidate and it is returned to each candidate who obtains (in referential votes) an electoral quotient of at least 4%; in **Estonia**, the deposit is returned to the candidate who obtains at least ½ of the electoral quotient or to the list of candidate which receives at least 5% of the valid cast votes; in **Ireland**, (where the single transferable vote system is used) the deposit is returned to the candidates who, at any moment of counting the votes, receives at least 25% of the electoral quota; in **Latvia**, the deposit is returned to the lists from which at least one candidate is elected; in **Lithuania**, the deposit is returned to the candidates in the single member constituencies where they are elected, as well as to the lists of candidates which receive at least 5% of the valid cast votes; in **Malta**, (where a similar system to that from Ireland is used) the deposit is returned to each candidate who, during the vote counting, reaches a quota of 10% of the valid cast votes; in **Netherlands**, only the parties that were not allocated any mandate at the previous elections, must open a deposit of 11,250 € which is returned to those parties whose lists of candidates (each party is entitled to one list only at national level) receive at least 75% of the electoral quotient; in the **United Kingdom**, the deposit is returned to each candidate who obtains at least 5% of the valid cast votes.

There is no duty for returning the deposit in **Bulgaria** and **Romania**.

It is worth mentioning that in those countries where there is the duty to open a bank deposit upon candidates' registration, the required amounts are not, generally, prohibitive, and therefore, they are not meant to remove from the electoral competition those who are not wealthy, but only to discourage those who do not have electoral support. For instance, in **Czech Republic**, the deposit corresponding to a list of candidates at the level of a region is of 200,000 Czech korunas which means almost 7,000 €, in **Estonia**, the deposit corresponding to each candidate is of two minimum salary, in **Latvia**, for each registered list of candidates (the elections are held by list voting organized in five constituencies), the deposit is the equivalent of 1,420 € and in **Lithuania**, for each candidate in a single member constituency, the value of the deposit must be equal to a medium salary, whereas

2 The electoral quotient is established at the electoral constituency or at national level and it represents the medium number of votes corresponding to an elected candidate, calculated as being the rest of the division of the valid cast votes to the number of mandates.

for each list of candidates the value of the deposit must be equal to 20 medium salaries. In Netherlands, the amount of 11,250 € cannot be considered prohibitive, since it is established at national level. These amounts prove that, in these particular countries, they don't aim to stop the access of those candidates who are not wealthy to elections but those who are aware of the fact that they do not have the chance to win a reasonable

number of votes, are discouraged from participating into the elections.

The following synoptic table presents the 27 countries which are the object of this study and regards the bank deposits the candidates must open or the taxes the political parties must pay to register for the elections.

Country	The amount that needs to be deposited or paid as a tax	Returnable / Non-returnable	Observations
Austria	435 €	Non-returnable.	The amount is considered to be a contribution to the printing costs of the ballot papers.
Belgium	-	-	-
Czech Republic	7,000 € for each list of candidates	Returnable.	The amount is returned to each list that receives 5% of the votes for the parties and for each coalition, a percentage according to the number of parties.
Cyprus	-	Returnable.	The amount is returned to each candidate who receives a number of preferential votes equal to at least 4% of the electoral quotient.
Denmark	-	-	-
Estonia	Two minimum salaries for each candidate	Returnable.	-
Finland	-	-	-
France	-	-	-
Germany	-	-	-
Greece	146,74 € for each candidate	Non-returnable.	The amount is considered to be a 'poll tax' meant to cover the expenses caused by the participation to the elections.
Ireland	300 Irish pounds for each candidate	Returnable.	The deposit is returned to each candidate who, during the counting of the votes, receives at least 25% of the 'electoral quota'.
Italy	-	-	-
Latvia	1.420 € for each list of candidates	Returnable.	The amount is returned to each list that contains at least one elected candidate.

**Table 2.** Amounts requested to candidates to be deposited or paid as tax

(continues)



Country	The amount that needs to be deposited or paid as a tax	Returnable / Non-returnable	Observations
Lithuania	One medium salary for each candidate in a single member constituency + 20 medium salaries for the list of candidates at national level	Returnable.	Each elected candidate and each list that receives at least 5% of the valid cast votes at national level (the list proposed at the level of the single constituency which is the entire country) are returned the deposit.
Luxemburg	-	-	-
Malta	-	Returnable.	The deposit is returned to each candidate who, during the counting of the votes, receives at least 10% of the 'electoral quota'.
Holland	11.250 €	Returnable.	The deposit is opened only by the parties that, at the previous elections were not allocated any mandate and are returned to the parties that obtain a number of votes equal to 75% of the electoral quotient.
Poland	-	-	-
Portugal	-	-	-
United Kingdom	almost 732€ (500 ) for each candidate	Returnable.	The amount is returned to each candidate who obtains at least 5% of the valid votes cast in his/her constituency.
Slovakia	-	-	-
Slovenia	-	-	-
Spain	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	-
Hungary	-	-	-
Bulgaria	-	-	-
Romania	-	-	-

Table 2. Amounts requested to candidates to be deposited or paid as tax

(continued)

## 6. Support signatures

Another way to discourage the candidate inflation, used in many cases, as an alternative to the duty of opening a bank deposit at the state's disposal, is the gathering of a number of signatures from supporters upon filing the candidature. However, the weak point of

this method is that not all those who sign on a candidate's or a party's list of supporters always elect that particular candidate or party. For instance, in Romania, where such a requirement functions for the presidential elections - a candidate running for presidency must present a list of names, identification data and signatures of at least 200, 000 eligible citizens

- eight of the twelve candidates obtained less than 200.000 votes at the elections of 2004. Beside the correctness beyond the signature gathering and the drafting of the lists, this can be explained by the fact that a person who is required to sign the supporting list of a candidate may kindly do so (since they have nothing to lose) although they may have no intention to vote for that particular candidate.

This requirement may be encountered in certain countries within the context of some very loose provisions referring to the setting up of the political parties. In other words, the right of association among the political parties is minimally regulated (there are member countries of the European Union, such as **Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden**, where a single citizen may form a political party, or others, such as **France**, or **Slovakia**, where two or three eligible citizens may make such an approach) but rather exact requirements are imposed at the moment of registering the political party in an electoral competition; these requirements are usually the proof of a certain number of members or the presentation of a list with a certain number of supporters (**Austria, Denmark, Slovakia**).

The support signatures are mainly required for the presidential elections and less often for the parliamentary elections. For example, in all the countries, except for two, where the presidents are elected directly by the citizens, the candidates must present list, with a number of supporters. The two exceptions are **France**, where a candidate running for presidency must be supported by at least 500 elected officials, regardless of the level, and not by the electors and **Ireland** where a candidate for President must be supported either by at least 20 members of the Parliament, or by at least four county councils or by a

former President.

## 6. Other restrictions

In the previous sub-chapters, we presented the requirements and the restrictions regarding the candidatures encountered in some important countries, especially in those of the European Union. Beside these, there are still some requirements in force in certain countries that can be explained by the peculiarities of those particular countries.

In **Estonia** and **Latvia**, for instance, one has the duty to know the official language of the state since the Russian speaking population represents an important percentage in the entire population of the two countries (almost 40% in each of the two countries).

In **Great Britain**, the members of the clergy belonging to the Anglican Church, the Roman-Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church do not have the right to candidate; the same restriction is applied to the members of aristocracy: princes, lords, knights etc. (except for the cases when these people renounce their titles).

In **France**, those who do not file a declaration of assets are not allowed to candidate.

Finally, **Luxemburg** presents an interesting situation since relatives (first or second degree) cannot be members of Parliament at the same time. In case such two persons candidate and they both are elected, the younger candidate must renounce in favor of the other.

# Who can propose candidates for the parliamentary elections

In the member countries of the European Union (as well as in many other countries), the main 'actor' of the electoral competition is the party, since most of the candidates are proposed by the parties and supported, in every possible way, by the parties. The fact that in other countries candidates proposed by alliances or party coalitions are also accepted does not really change the situation as it is a well-known fact that, within such a structure, each party appoints its candidates according to the number established at the level of the alliance/coalition.

Alongside the candidates proposed by the parties or party coalitions, there are also the independent candidates and the difference resides in the fact that requirements for their registration are not the same for each country.

However, there are a series of countries where, apart from the political parties, the coalitions and, to a certain extent, citizens who may propose independent candidates, there are other structures that may propose candidatures. For example, in **Austria**, three members of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament (Nationalrat) may propose a candidate. In **Finland**, an 'association of electors' of minimum 100 members, constituted in an electoral constituency, may propose a candidate in that particular constituency. The situation is almost similar in **Spain**, where the 'electors' associations' may also propose candidates, as well as in **France** and in **Netherlands**, where the candidates may be proposed also by 'political groups' formed of electors at the constituency level (other than the political parties). In the **German** electoral legislation, it is explicitly specified the fact that there is not a monopoly of the political parties on the participation in the elections since all the other types of organizations are equally treated as long as they present lists of 200 supporters for each proposed candidate.

In **Poland**, the candidates are proposed by the 'electoral committees' that represent, according to the law, the structure of representation and execution of a political party or party coalition, but also a group of citizens of at least 1.000 members.

Another category of countries including **Italy**, **Slovenia** and **Hungary**, which may also comprise **Romania**

once accepted in the European Union, must be especially mentioned. These are countries where the organizations of the national minorities may propose candidates in all types of elections (in many of the other countries, the national minorities may also send representatives in the Parliament, but they have to use one of the forms of association available for all citizens: political parties, political groups, electors' associations etc.) as they benefit from a series of important advantages.

In **Italy**, for instance, the political groups that represent acknowledged linguistic minorities are accepted based on the rule that political parties that do not have parliamentary groups in both Chambers must gather lists of signatures - between 1,000 and 5,000 - from the supporters for each electoral constituency, according to the constituency. The only requirement for such a political group to meet in order to benefit from this advantage is to have obtained at least one mandate in the last parliamentary elections.

In **Romania**, an organization representing a national minority may send a representative in the Chamber of Deputies if its list of candidates obtains, nationwide, at least 10% of the medium number of votes cast at national level to elect a deputy (in 2004, such an organization needed almost 3,300 votes to have an elected deputy as the medium number of votes corresponding to an elected deputy was of 32,446). Yet, when the law was adopted, an unjustified discrimination was made between the organizations represented in Parliament at that time and the organizations without parliamentary representation and the latter had to meet, upon registration, all the requirements necessary for the setting up of a political party: the presentation of list of at least 25,000 supporters from at least 15 counties (out of 41) and the municipality of Bucharest, with at least 300 signatures raised from these counties.

In **Hungary**, an organization of a national minority (like any other 'social organization' which follows the law of financing the political parties) may propose candidates only at the level of the single-member constituencies (the right to propose lists of candidates at the level of the 'territorial constituencies' and at national level is

reserved only to the political parties and party coalitions).

One last thing that should be mentioned within this sub-chapter is the fact that independent candidatures are accepted in most countries analyzed in this study (provided certain requirements, more or less difficult, are met, according to each country) except for two

countries: Latvia and Portugal, where the candidates can be proposed only by the political parties or their different forms of association.

In the table below, there is a centralized situation referring to the types of candidates in each country analyzed in this study, based on the party, organization or coalition that proposes them.

Country	Types of candidates	Observations
Austria	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	The candidatures for the Lower Chamber (Nationalrat) must be supported, either by three members in function of the Chamber, either by a number of eligible citizens. This number differs according to the size of the constituency and may be between 200 and 500.
Belgium	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	The candidature for the Senate must be supported by at least 5.000 electors who are either part of the Flemish constituency or the French one or by two senators who belong to the candidates' linguistic area.  The candidatures for the Chamber of Representatives must be supported by a number between 200 and 500 electors according to the size of the constituency or by at least three members of the Chamber.
The Czech Republic	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	As far as an independent candidate is concerned, a petition must be signed by 1.000 supporting eligible citizens.
Cyprus	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	
Denmark	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	Each independent candidate must be supported by 150 electors.
Estonia	Candidates proposed by - Political parties - Party coalitions Independent candidates	An independent candidate may register for the elections without any support from anybody.

**Table.** Candidate types, according to the party, organization or coalition that proposes them

(continues)

Country	Types of candidates	Observations
Finland	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Associations formed by electors from the constituencies</li> </ul>	A number of 100 signatures of electors from the same constituency is needed in order to form an association of constituency which may have the right to propose a candidate for the parliamentary elections.
France	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Political groups formed of the electors in the constituency</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	An independent candidate may candidate without being affiliated to a political organization but his/her votes will not be taken into consideration for the allocation of the public subvention.
Germany	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Other types of organizations</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	<p>For the Bundestag elections, each candidate must file a list of 200 signatures, regardless of his support of a political party.</p> <p>For the Bundesrat elections, if the party does not have national representation or a branch in the constituency for which he wishes to candidate, the list of candidatures must be accompanied by a number of signatures between 100 and 2.000 (according to the size of the constituency). This duty does not apply to the organizations that represent national minorities.</p> <p>It is explicitly mentioned in the legislation that there is no monopoly of the political parties regarding the participation in the elections (belonging to national minorities or other type of minorities) and the independent candidates who have the same rights and duties as the political parties.</p>
Greece	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	An independent candidate must be supported by at least 12 eligible citizens.
Ireland	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	For the Lower Chamber of the Parliament and for the European Parliament elections, the candidates who are not affiliated to a political party must present a number of 30 signatures of the electors registered in the constituency where they candidate.

**Table.** Candidate types, according to the party, organization or coalition that proposes them

(continued)

Country	Types of candidates	Observations
Italy	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Political groups representing linguistic minorities</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	The parties or coalitions which do not have parliamentary groups in both Chambers, as well as those that did not obtain at least one mandate at the last elections for the European Parliament must present a number of signatures proportional to the size of the constituency where they candidate. The political groups which represent the acknowledged linguistic minorities and which obtained at least one mandate at the last Senate or Chamber elections are an exception.
Eatvia	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul>	Access to the electoral competition is allowed only to the political parties or political party associations, and the independent candidatures are not accepted.
Eithuania	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates (only in the single-member constituencies)</p>	Each independent candidate must present a list of names and signatures from at least 1,000 supporters.
Euxemburg	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	The lists of candidates must be supported by a number of 250 electors, a member of the national Parliament or one of the European Parliament.
Malta	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	The nomination paper must be signed by at least four electors from the constituency for which the candidate is nominated.
Netherlands	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Political groups formed of electors from the constituency</li> </ul> <p>Independent candidates</p>	
Poland	<p>Candidates proposed by electoral committees</p>	<p>The Electoral Committee is the structure of representation and execution of a political party, of a coalition or a group of a minimum of 1,000 citizens.</p> <p>A senator's candidature must be accompanied by 3,000 signatures from citizens.</p>
Portugal	<p>Candidates proposed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul>	Candidates who are not members of the party or the coalition may also appear on its list.

**Table.** Candidate types, according to the party, organization or coalition that proposes them

(continued)

Country	Types of candidates	Observations
United Kingdom	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> Independent candidates	The candidature form must be signed by the person who proposes the candidate and by his deputy person, as well as by at least ten supporters.
Slovakia	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> Independent candidates	A political party that has at least 10,000 members can file a list of candidates. If the number of the party members is below the limit, a petition must be filed with the equivalent number of signatures that would balance the difference. The parties that are already represented in the 'National Council' are an exception.
Slovenia	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Organizations of national minorities</li> </ul> Independent candidates	The lists must be supported by the signatures of at least 3 representatives in the National Assembly or by at least 50 voters with permanent residence in the region.
Spain	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Associations of electors formed by a minimum of two members.</li> </ul>	The independent candidates may appear only on the lists proposed by the voters' associations.  There must be a number of signatures equal to 1% of the number of voters registered on the electoral lists of that particular region in order to present a list of candidates in the constituency.
Sweden	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul>	If a political party does not have already representation in the Riksdag, it must present a list of 1,500 eligible supporters in order to propose a list of candidates.  The fact that one person may establish a political party explains the lack of independent candidates among the types of candidates encountered in Sweden.
Hungary	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> <li>- Social organizations</li> </ul> Independent candidates	The independent candidates may participate in the elections only in the single-member constituencies and must have a minimum number of 750 supporters.  A party that nominated a certain number of candidates (stipulated by the law for each region) in a quarter of the single-member constituencies of that particular region (yet at least in two constituencies) may propose a list for the regional constituencies.  A party may propose a list at national level if it only filed lists in at least seven regional constituencies.  Social organizations also include national or ethnic minorities.

**Table.** Candidate types, according to the party, organization or coalition that proposes them

(continued)



Country	Types of candidates	Observations
Bulgaria	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions</li> </ul> Independent candidates proposed by initiative committees	Independent candidates must present a number of signatures from the voters with permanent residence in the constituency where they candidate, which is proportional to the size of the constituency and which varies between 1,100 and 2,000.
Romania	Candidates proposed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political parties</li> <li>- Party coalitions (meaning political or electoral alliances)</li> <li>- Organizations of the national minorities</li> </ul> Independent candidates	An independent candidate must present a list of supporters equal to at least 5% of the total number of the voters registered on the electoral lists in the constituency where he/she candidates.

**Table.** Candidate types, according to the party, organization or coalition that proposes them

(continued)

## 6. Rules regarding the association between parties, alliances, other types of organizations

Taking into consideration the fact that in all countries, with no exception, the main actors of the electoral competition are the political parties, at least with a view to the fact that most candidates, especially those who are likely to be elected, are proposed by the parties, we consider a presentation of the requirements which the political parties must meet upon their institution, regarding the minimum number of founding members, to be suitable. According to the table below, this aspect varies a lot from one country to the other, which means that there is not yet a standard on this subject in the European Union. If in countries such as Austria,

Denmark, Holland or Sweden, one single person may found a political party, 7,500 eligible citizens are needed in Portugal in order to do so. However, from all the analyzed countries, Romania is the country that imposes the highest minimum number of founding members for a political party - 25,000 - regardless of the report between this number and the country's population. Moreover, in Romania, one cannot found political parties meant to promote political programs at local or area level since, alongside the requirement referring to the 25,000 minimum number of founding members, there is the one according to which these members must be from at least 15 counties of the country (out of 41) and the municipality of Bucharest, at least 300 from each of these counties plus Bucharest.

Country	Number of founding members	Observations
Austria	1	
Belgium	3	
The Czech Republic		
Cyprus		
Denmark	1	
Estonia	1.000	

**Table 4.** Founding members required for a political party

(continues)

Country	Number of founding members	Observations
Finland	5.000	The associations whose purpose is mainly to influence the internal affairs can be introduced into the parties' register. In order to be registered as parties, the associations must present a political program and 5,000 signatures from the electors.
France	2	According to the parties' status, all associations which fall under the law of financing the political parties are considered to be parties.
Germany	300	
Greece	200	
Ireland	300	300 electors or the declaration of a member of Parliament who is also a member of the party are needed to found a political party.
Italy	2 - 5	There is no minimum member limit for the founding of a party; even two persons can do it, though 5 members are required to register the party in the registry of organizations in some regions.
Latvia	200	
Lithuania	400	
Luxemburg	3	
Malta		
Holland	1	
Poland	1.000	
Portugal	7.500	
The United Kingdom	8	
Slovakia	3	
Slovenia	2	The political parties are defined by the law of associations and this does not mention a minimum number of members, but only uses the plural form 'members'.
Spain	2	In fact, the law of the political parties does not mention a minimum number; it just uses the plural form 'members'.
Sweden	1	
Hungary	5.000	

**Table 4.** *Founding members required for a political party*

*(continues)*

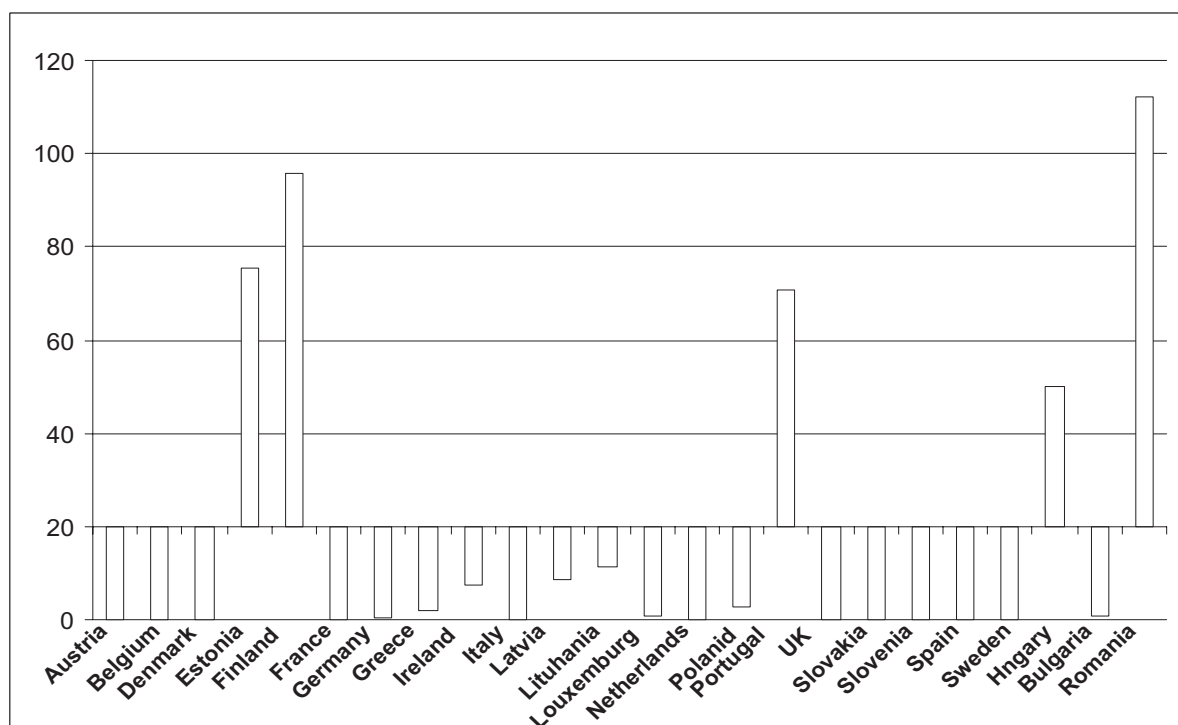
Country	Number of founding members	Observations
Bulgaria	50	
Romania	25.000	The 25,000 members must be from at least 15 counties and the municipality of Bucharest, and at least 300 founding members must be permanent residents in these counties.

**Table 4.** *Founding members required for a political party*

(continues)

The next image presents a chart built based on the ratio between the number of founding members necessary for the founding of a political party and the number of

inhabitants in each of the 27 countries that are the object of this study.



**Grafic 1.** *The ratio between the number of founding members necessary for the founding of a political party and the number of inhabitants*

# The regulations regarding those who vote and those who get votes in each of the European Union countries, in Bulgaria and in Romania

A short presentation of all the information contained by the previous chapters regarding each country is included bellow. The information presented in this chapter is generally different from a country to another. The information that is common for all 27 countries such as the minimum age for getting the right to vote (18 years old for all 27 countries) is not included anymore.

The short presentation corresponding to every country includes a short presentation of the voting system used as well. That presentation was copied from the first brochure belonging to the '25 + 2 electoral models' the one referring to the voting systems, so anyone who read this second brochure can understand the context in which the rules regarding the candidates work.

## Austria

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and convicted persons whose sentence is over one year and whose suspension is revoked six months after the end of their sentence.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the National Council (the Lower Chamber), 30 years old for the Federal Council (the Upper Chamber) and 35 years old for President.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The Austrian citizenship is compulsory for the candidature for the parliamentary and the presidential elections.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the registration of the candidatures**

Any party that participates in the parliamentary elections must pay a non-returnable tax of 435 €.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The National Council is elected by party-list proportional representation with a closed voting list and preferential vote which may be optional. The political parties may put forward lists of candidates on the level of the nine provinces (Länder), on the level of the 43 regional districts in which the nine provinces are divided, as well as on federal level. In the Federal Council, the seats are divided among the parties, in accordance with the number of seats that they have in the regional assemblies.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

The candidates may be proposed by political parties, by party coalitions or they may be independent.

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## Belgium

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and convicted persons whose sentence is over four months.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

Yes.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Belgian citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payment of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

For the election of the House of Representatives, it is used a proportional representation party list system and an optional preferential organized on the level of several member constituencies. As for the Senate, 40 of its members are elected directly, in multi-member constituencies founded on linguistic criteria (25 by the Flemish electoral college and 15 by the French electoral college) using the proportional representation party list system. 21 senators are appointed by the communities assemblies - 10 by and within the Flemish Community Parliament, 10 appointed by de French Community Parliament and one by and within the German speaking Community Parliament. 10 more are co-opted based on the power of the parties represented in the Senate: six by the senators elected directly and four by the 21 senators appointed by the communities. The direct descendants of the monarch are, also, senators but they are not counted when the quorum of this Chamber is established.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

The candidates may be proposed by political parties, by party coalitions or they may be independent.

## Czech Republic

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections (the President is elected by the Parliament).

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Czech citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties that participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax of 7,000 € for each list of candidates.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The senators are elected by absolute majority system (in order to be elected, a candidate must receive more than half of the valid, cast votes) within single member constituencies. The deputies are elected by proportional representation closed party list system carried out at the level of electoral constituencies that correspond to the administrative regions of the Czech Republic; each voter also has the possibility to cast preferential votes in favor of no more than four candidates from the list they vote.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

The candidates may be proposed by political parties, by party coalitions or they may be independent.

## Cyprus

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and convicted persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

Yes.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

25 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential ones.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Cypriot citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The deposit is settled for each candidate and it is returned for each candidate who obtains (in preferential votes) at least 4% of the electoral quotient. The electoral quotient is established at the level of the electoral constituency or at national level and it represents the medium number of votes corresponding to an elected candidate, calculated as being the rest of the division between the number of valid cast votes and the number of mandates.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The elections are carried out based on a close party list proportional representation and preferential vote, organized at the level of six electoral constituencies.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Denmark

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons living abroad for more than 12 years.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Danish citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The Danish electoral system is a complex one based on the principle of proportional representation combined with that of regional allocation of mandates according to the population, the number of electors and

the geographical area. As far as the elections are concerned, Denmark is divided in three regions: The Metropolitan Copenhagen, the Islands and Jutland. In their turn, these are divided into 17 electoral constituencies. The 17 constituencies are parted in 103 'nominal' districts, which are not relevant as far as the allocation of mandates among the electoral competitors is concerned, but they hold an important role in the process of allocation of mandates among the candidates of the same party, as well as from the point of view of the election management. Each political party has the possibility, not the obligation, to allot each candidate, within each of the 17 constituencies, a certain 'nominal' district, in which the candidate appears the first on his party's ballot papers.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Estonia

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and convicted persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have Estonian citizenship. There is no

requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The candidates who participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax equivalent to 2 minimum salaries.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The members of the parliament are elected by an open list voting system and mandatory preferential vote, which takes place at the level of 11 multi-member constituencies.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Finland

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

There are none.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for Presidency are required to have Finnish citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

There is none.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

199 of the representatives of the Parliament are elected by a proportional representation party list system and by mandatory preferential vote, and the ballot is organized at the level of the 15 electoral constituencies that correspond to the country's administrative regions. In one of the constituencies (the Åland Islands) only one candidate is elected, the one who receives the largest number of votes.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as candidates proposed by associations formed by the electors from the constituencies.

## France

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons convicted only for certain crimes.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

23 years old for both the parliamentary and the presidential elections.



**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have French citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The deputies of the National Assembly are elected by a single member majority system with two rounds and the elections are held in 577 single member electoral constituencies. In its originality, the Senate elects its members by single member majority system in the small departments (in which a maximum of three senators is elected) and by proportional representation system in the other departments. The 331 senators are elected on a six-year renewable term. Every three years the senators are elected by an electoral college

formed of over 145.000 people: deputies, regional or general counselors, delegates of the local councils, members of the Superior Council of the French citizens living abroad. In the departments in which a maximum of three senators are elected, the elections take place by a single member voting system with two rounds. In order to be elected in the first round, the candidate must have obtained the absolute majority of the votes validly cast and in equal number to at least a quarter of the enlisted electors. In the second round, a relative majority is sufficient and the eldest candidate wins in case of perfect equality. In the departments in which at least five senators are elected, the elections take place in one round, by close list proportional representation system. The same system is used also for the 12 senators representing the French citizens living abroad.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by political groups formed by the electors from the constituency, as well as independent candidates.

## Germany

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons living abroad, except for those living in the member countries of the European Council and those having a residence of less than 10 years in other countries.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections (the President is elected by the Parliament).

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have German citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

For the Bundestag, the elections are held based on a proportional representation voting system by compensation, with a personalized selection. A number of 299 members are elected in 299 single member constituencies, where each is declared to be the winner if he receives the largest number of votes. The other seats go to the candidates on the lists of the political parties that proposed them at the land level. The candidates who run for the elections in a single member constituency can also appear on the party's list at the land level. The members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the legislative assemblies of the 16 lands.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by other types of organizations, as well as independent candidates.

## Greece

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons living abroad.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

Yes.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Greek citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties that participate in the elections must pay a non-returnable tax of 146.74 € for each candidate.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The elections are held based on open list proportional representation system and mandatory preferential votes and are organized at the level of 56 electoral constituencies (among which five are being allocated one mandate only).

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Ireland

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

There are none.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

Yes, only for British citizens.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have Irish citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties that participate in the elections must pay a returnable tax of 300 Irish pounds for each candidate.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

Starting with 1922, the single transferable vote system is used for the election of the Chamber of Representatives and the elections are held in 42 electoral constituencies; the number of mandates corresponding to each constituency varies, according to the law, between three and eight (in accordance with

the number of inhabitants in each constituency). In fact, the number of representatives who are elected in a constituency is not bigger than five. The members of the Senate are appointed, in a maximum of 90 days after the election of the Chamber of Representatives, as it follows: 11 of them are appointed by the Prime Minister (Taoiseach); six are elected by the graduates of two universities - The National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin, of the representatives of these two universities (three of each), using the single transferable vote system; 43 are elected among those people having the experience and the expertise in one of the five fields of activity: culture and education, agriculture and fishing, work, industry and commerce (including architecture) and administration and social services (including volunteering activities). The election is done (by mail) by an electoral body formed of the members of the Chamber of Representatives, the members of the Senate in function, the members of the district councils, using the single transferable vote system.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Italy

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Persons convicted for certain crimes only, including all the sentences for breaking the electoral legislation.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

Yes, with no sanction for the electors who fail to come to the ballot.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections (the President is elected by the Parliament).

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Italian citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

Starting with December 2005, it is used the proportional representation party system with a blocked list. At the same time, the Italian electoral system stipulates the granting of an electoral bonus for the party/coalition which ranks on the first position. For the Chamber of Deputies, 12 mandates are allocated in a constituency representing the citizens living abroad and one mandate is allotted to the region of Valle d'Aosta. The remaining 617 mandates are allocated to the 26 electoral constituencies set up at the regional level, each of them having a number of mandates proportional to its size. As for the Senate, a mandate is allotted to Valle d'Aosta, seven to Trento Alto Adige and six to the constituency representing the citizens living abroad. The rest of 301 mandates are allocated to constituencies set up at the level of the 18 left regions, each region receiving a number of mandates proportional to its population.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by political groups representing linguistic minorities, as well as independent candidates.

## Latvia

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled and convicted persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have Latvian citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties which participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax of 1.420 € for each list of candidate.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The elections are held based on a proportional representation party list system and on a preferential vote organized at the level of five electoral constituencies. A candidate may appear on the lists put forward by several electoral constituencies.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Lithuania

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

25 years old for the parliamentary elections and 40 years old for the presidential elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have had residence on the country's territory for at least three years.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties which participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax of one medium salary for each candidate in a single-member constituency + 20 medium salaries for the list of candidates at national level.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The electoral system is a mixed/direct parallel one: 71 candidates are elected by single member constituency voting system in electoral constituencies and 70 are elected by list voting at national level (the whole territory is considered an electoral constituency).

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates, only in the single-member constituencies.

## Luxembourg

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled and convicted persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

Yes.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections.

### **Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Luxembourg citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

### **The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

### **The type of the electoral system used**

The proportional representation multiple voting system is used for the elections in four electoral constituencies: North - nine deputies, South - 23 deputies, Centre - 21 deputies, East - seven deputies.

### **The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Malta

### **Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons living abroad only for those who had residence abroad for more than 12 months in the last 18 months, and convicted persons.

### **Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

### **The duty to vote**

No.

### **The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have had residence for at least six months on the country's territory.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

There is none.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The electoral system used for the election of the parliament is a proportional representation party list

voting system with a single transferable vote, which also assumes a compensation mechanism in certain situations. The ballot is organized in 13 constituencies, each of them electing five members of the Parliament.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Netherlands

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons sentenced for more than one year and convicted for certain crimes only.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**  
No.**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Dutch citizenship. There is no requirement for the period of residence on the country's territory.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties which participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax of 11,250€.

**The type of the electoral system used**

For the election of the lower Chamber it is used a proportional representation party list system, with list voting and preferential vote organized at the level of a single constituency (which is the territory of the country). The members of the higher Chamber are elected indirectly by a body of electors formed of the representatives of the regional councils, using the same proportional representation party list system and the preferential vote. The seats are allocated at national level among the different lists or groups of lists that obtained a minimum of 0,67%; each receives a number of seats equal to the exact number of times the number of cast votes is a multiple of the representation norm established at national level (the number of votes validly cast in the whole country divided to the 150 seats that must be allocated).

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, party coalitions, by political groups formed by electors from the constituencies, as well as independent candidates.

## Poland

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have Polish citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.



**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The electoral system used for the election of Sejm is a proportional representation party list system and a mandatory preferential vote organized at the level of some multi-member electoral constituencies. The constituencies are organized at the level of the voivodships or at that of some divisions of these, the main rule used to establish the 'borders' of the constituencies is that these borders cannot break off or cross those of the counties or the towns that have a county status in the electoral legislation and that form the territory of a voivodship. In other words, an electoral constituency can include only entire counties and towns (as those above-mentioned) and not their

subdivisions. The size of a constituency must be as large as to allow seven deputies to be elected in the Sejm. The senators are elected by a system based on the majority principle, in established constituencies so that between two and four senators are elected in each of them. In every electoral constituency, each electoral committee (representing a political party, apolitical alliance etc), may propose a number of candidates at most equal to the number of senators that must be elected in that particular constituency.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by electoral committees. The Electoral Committee is a structure of representation and execution of a political party, coalition or group of minimum 1,000 citizens.

## Portugal

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons, persons living abroad only for the legislative elections, and convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

Yes, only for the citizens of the European Union having permanent residence in Portugal and for the Brazilian citizens who have special 'equal rights'.

**The duty to vote**

Yes, without any sanction for the citizens who fail to come to the ballot.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections and 35 years old for the presidential elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament or for President are required to have Portuguese citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The elections are held based on a proportional representation party list electoral system with blocked list. A number of 226 members of the Parliament are elected within electoral constituencies, which correspond to the administrative units. The number of mandates that are allocated to a constituency is proportional to the number of electors in that constituency and is established with the help of the d'Hondt method (the highest averages). Four mandates are allocated at the level of two electoral constituencies for the citizens with the right to vote who live abroad - one for the Portuguese citizens resident in the member countries of the European Union, for whom two mandates are allocated and another for the citizens living in the other countries, the Macao region included.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties and by party coalitions.

## United Kingdom

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

The mentally disabled persons, the persons living abroad only those who have had residence abroad for more than 15 years, and convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

Yes, only the citizens of the Commonwealth and of Ireland.

**The duty to vote**

Yes.

**The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have British citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

The parties which participate in the parliamentary elections must pay a returnable tax of 732 € for each candidate.

**The type of the electoral system used**

On the territory of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) the members of the House of Commons are elected by a plurality voting system with one round, organized in single member constituencies and also known as 'first past the post'. In Northern Ireland, the elections are organized based on the single transferable vote system, used in Ireland.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions or independent candidates.

## Slovakia

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled and convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Slovakian citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

In Slovakia, the Parliament is elected by proportional representation party list system and preferential vote, organized at the level of one electoral constituency, established for the entire territory.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, as well as independent candidates.

## Slovenia

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for both the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Slovenian citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.



**The type of the electoral system used**

The parliament is elected by proportional representation voting system with a closed party list, organized at the level of eight electoral constituencies. A constituency is divided in 11 regions, one for each of the candidates on the list of a party (in a constituency, the 11 candidates on the list of a party are distributed each in one region). Two special constituencies are established for the national minorities - Italian and Hungarian - which have the right, each, to one deputy mandate.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by organizations of the national minorities, as well as independent candidates.

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## Spain

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons and persons convicted for certain crimes only.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Spanish citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

For the election of the Chamber of Deputies, it is used the proportional representation voting system with a blocked list organized at the level of 50 electoral constituencies. For the election of the Senate, two systems are used: 208 senators are elected directly in 52 multimember electoral constituencies (with four senators each) by the "limited voting" system in which every elector does not vote a list but a number of three candidates at most; the other 40 senators are elected indirectly by being appointed by the legislative assemblies of the 17 autonomous communities, each of them having the right to choose a senator plus one more for every million inhabitants.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions and candidates proposed by associations of electors formed of a minimum of two members.

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## Sweden

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Swedish citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

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**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The electoral system used is proportional representation party list system and a preferential

(optional) vote, organized at the level of 29 electoral constituencies that correspond to the administrative regions.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties and by party coalitions.

## Hungary

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled persons, persons living abroad and convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

18 years old for the parliamentary elections (the President is elected by the Parliament).

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament are required to have Hungarian citizenship. They must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The electoral system used is a mixed one, which combines the plurality system with the proportional system: 176 members are elected at the level of the same number of single member constituencies, by single member majority system with two rounds, at most 152 at the level of 20 regional constituencies by organized list voting and at least 58 of the mandates are 'compensatory' and allocated to some of the candidates on the national lists of the parties. Each party/coalition has the right to propose: one candidate in each of the 176 single member constituencies; one list of candidates in each of the 20 district constituencies; a nation-wide list.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by social organizations, as well as independent candidates.

## Bulgaria

**Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

21 years old for the parliamentary elections and 40 years old for the presidential elections.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates running for Parliament and for President are required to have Bulgarian citizenship. The candidates for President must have had residence on the country's territory for at least five years.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

The elections are held based on a proportional representation party list system with a blocked list, organized at the level of 31 electoral constituencies, among which three are founded in Sofia and two in Plovdiv (the other 26 constituencies correspond to the administrative regions).

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions, by social organizations, as well as independent candidates proposed by initiative committees.

**Romania****Citizens whose right to vote is suspended or annulled**

Mentally disabled and convicted persons.

**Citizens of other states who may vote on the territory of the country, for the legislative elections**

No.

**The duty to vote**

No.

**The minimum age for candidature**

23 years old for the election of the Chamber of Deputies and 35 years old for election for the Senate and for the President.

**Requirements related to citizenship and residence, for the candidates**

The candidates must be Romanian citizens upon the registration of their candidature.

**The duty of paying a tax or of opening a bank deposit, upon the filing of the candidatures**

Neither a proof of the opening of a bank deposit at the state's disposal, nor the payments of tax are imposed upon the registration for the elections.

**The type of the electoral system used**

For both Chambers, the elections are held based on a proportional representation party list system with a blocked list, organized at the level of 42 electoral constituencies, among which one is represented by Bucharest.

**The types of candidates, according to who proposes them**

There may be candidates proposed by political parties, by party coalitions (namely political and electoral alliances), by organizations of the national minorities, as well as independent candidates.

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Prezenta lucrare face parte din ciclul „25 + 2 modele electorale”, editat de Centrul de Resurse pentru Democrație al Asociației Pro Democrația și care conține informații, date și comentarii rezultate în urma analizei comparative a legislației electorale din cele 25 de țări membre ale Uniunii Europene și din cele două țări candidate la aderare pentru 2007 – Bulgaria și România.

Acest număr este dedicat analizei condițiilor de participare la alegeri, atât în privința celor care votează, cât și în ceea ce îi privește pe candidați și structurile care îi propun și îi susțin în competiția electorală - partide politice, diferite forme de asociere ale partidelor politice, organizații ale minorităților naționale sau de alta natură, etc.

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